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TAGS: [IS](#) [KMDR](#) [MEDIA](#) [REACTION](#) [REPORT](#)
SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

- [1](#). Mideast
- [1](#)2. Lebanese-Syrian Track

Key stories in the media:

All media underscored unrest involving settlers and pro-settler demonstrators on Wednesday, including road blockages throughout the country, during which at least five police officers were wounded and 147 demonstrators were arrested. The media noted the police's efficiency. The media reported that settlers attempted to lynch a 16-year-old Palestinian in Gaza and that PM Sharon has given instructions to find those who harmed him. Settlers clashed with soldiers who came to evacuate the extremists' Tal Yam stronghold on the Mawasi coast near Gush Katif. Leading media quoted Sharon as saying: "All that rioting must stop." Sharon was quoted as saying in an interview with Ha'aretz that the government must take "every measure" necessary to end acts of violence and road blocking by right-wing extremists. Sharon was quoted as saying in an interview with Yediot that what is occurring is not a struggle over disengagement from Gaza, but over the state. All media reported that Attorney General Menachem Mazuz decided Wednesday that anti-disengagement protesters will no longer enjoy privileged conditions when arrested, but that they will be treated like every other detainee. Jerusalem Post reported that the Shin Bet ordered the security heads of cabinet on Wednesday to take measurements of ministers for flak jackets.

All media reported that on Wednesday afternoon, an IDF soldier was killed and three others were lightly wounded when Hizbullah shelled an IDF outpost in the Sheba Farms area. The IDF responded with artillery fire aimed at Hizbullah positions in Lebanon. At the same time, IAF fighter jets attacked five Hizbullah positions in Lebanon. The clashes started as a group of five Hizbullah fighters crossed the border in the area. Israel lodged complaints to the UN with the commander of UNIFIL and Israel's representative to the UN Danny Gillerman. Leading media reported that fighting continued this morning. Israel Radio cited IDF claims that a Hizbullah member was killed or wounded in the Sheba Farms, a report denied by Hizbullah.

Ha'aretz quoted Israeli officials as saying that Israel will not transfer Qalqilya to the PA this week, even though Sharon promised to do so at his meeting with PA Chairman [President] Mahmoud Abbas last week. The officials said that the delay is due to the escalating violence in the West Bank. Ha'aretz and Yediot also say that the heads of the defense establishment reported Wednesday to the security-political cabinet that Abbas is not as weak as he claims to be. They claim that he is trying to put on a facade of weakness to avoid taking action against the terror organizations and to pressure Israel into efforts to bolster his regime. Ha'aretz reported that the defense officials point out a certain weakening on the part of Abbas.

Maariv reported that on Tuesday, the U.S. House of Representatives approved a USD-2.5 billion U.S. aid budget for Israel -- USD 2.3 billion as defense assistance and USD 240 million as economic assistance.

Maariv says that the amount is not due to change substantially when it comes up for a vote at the U.S. Senate in a few weeks.

Jerusalem Post reported that PA Minister of Civil Affairs Muhammad Dahlan, who is in charge of coordinating the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip with Israel, on Wednesday accused Jewish settlers of "poisoning" the lands in the settlements slated for evacuation.

Jerusalem Post reported that Fatah Central Committee Chairman Farouk Kaddoumi, a strong opponent of the Oslo Accords, will participate in the discussions of the committee in Amman today. The committee is convening for the first time since Yasser Arafat's death.

Jerusalem Post reported that, for the first time ever, an Arab satellite TV network has agreed to take part in a project with an Israeli TV network: Abu Dhabi Satellite Channel will broadcast a documentary film series about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on Saturday night, produced by Search For Common Ground, a non-profit organization. The film will air simultaneously on Israeli Cable Channel 8, the Palestine Broadcasting Corporation, and the private Palestinian Maan-TV network.

Yediot reported that the Israel Air Force has officially become the "Air and Space Branch," (rough translation) reflecting strategic changes in its operations.

Leading media reported that Infrastructure Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer today will sign with Egyptian Oil Minister Sameh Fahmi in Cairo today a significant agreement to procure natural gas from Egypt -- in an amount of USD 2.5-3 billion over 15 to 20 years.

1. Mideast:

Summary:

Deputy Editor-in-Chief Avi Bettelheim wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv: "I [am] more sure than ever that the entire [disengagement is] going to be all right, if only because the settlers are very close to making the rest of the public sick and tired of them."

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "If the police deploy a 6,000-strong force throughout the country, but are unable to prevent roads from being blocked, what will happen during the pullout, when a larger number of police will be busy evacuating the [Gaza] Strip?"

Middle East affairs commentator Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot: "Why is the Israeli evacuation from the Gaza Strip known as 'disengagement,' if afterwards the Palestinian workers will return to Israel as though nothing has happened?"

Block Quotes:

1I. "They Kicked the Ball Into Their Own Net"

Deputy Editor-in-Chief Avi Bettelheim wrote on page one of popular, pluralist Maariv (June 30): "On Wednesday, as I watched the scenes from the blocked roads on television, I was more sure than ever that the entire [disengagement] was going to be all right, if only because the settlers are very close to making the rest of the public sick and tired of them -- and when that happens, their battle will become insignificant, and will be unable to change anything of the government's original plan for the evacuation of the Gaza Strip and northern Samaria [the northernmost part of the West Bank]. When the extreme Right took the law into its own hands in the territories, the general public, which is usually apathetic, was prepared to turn a blind eye, because it did not affect the crowded schedule of their lives.... It is a pity that the impotent leadership of the settlers and their irresponsible spiritual leaders cannot calm the tempers and behavior of their followers and explain to them the limits of legitimate protest, and perhaps they just do not wish to. For protest is legitimate and it is hard not to sympathize with the pain of those who are to be evacuated, but what happened yesterday and last week on the roads, including scattering metal barbs, could very easily get out of hand and lead to loss of life.... Disengagement cannot and must not be stopped, and the police and

other law enforcement agencies have to stop the process that began as legitimate protest but is deteriorating very rapidly into rampaging without limits, as though this were a children's game and human life and the future of the democratic state were not at risk."

II. "Escalation Everywhere"

Military correspondent Amos Harel wrote on page one of independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (June 30): "If anyone was still harboring doubts, along came Wednesday's day of battles throughout the country and laid them to rest: the disengagement has arrived.... The events of the past week proved what was already learned, in sweat and blood, on the hills of Samaria [i.e. the northern West Bank] -- the extreme right interprets any concession as a sign of weakness and any delay in the legal handling of a problem as a license for fiercer provocation. The violence is coming from the pullout opponents, and it is dictating the nature of the confrontation. The IDF and police are gradually streamlining their responses to riots, but the events of recent days constitute a worrying prelude ahead of the real thing in August. If the police deploy a 6,000-strong force throughout the country, but are unable to prevent roads from being blocked, what will happen during the pullout, when a larger number of police will be busy evacuating the [Gaza] Strip?"

III. "Pulling the Wool Over Our Eyes"

Middle East affairs commentator Guy Bechor, a lecturer at the Interdisciplinary Center, wrote in mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (June 30): "Anyone who has been following what has been happening on the roads over the past few months cannot help but notice that the Palestinian workers are returning.... These images have not been seen for several years.... What is worse is that Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres has recently been holding economic meetings in order to return to the Israeli labor market tens of thousands of Palestinian workers, the great majority of whom will come from post-disengagement Gaza. This is a severe phenomenon both for Israel and for the Palestinians, and it should be nipped in the bud. The correct policy should be: zero Palestinian labor in Israel. Why is the Israeli evacuation from the Gaza Strip known as 'disengagement,' if afterwards the Palestinian workers will return to Israel as though nothing has happened?.... After disengagement, Israel should open the border between the Gaza Strip and Egypt. This way the Palestinians will return to work in the Arab world -- through Egypt -- and from there to the entire world, and the issue of their labor will become an internal Palestinian or internal Arab issue. Just as Israel should not worry about the livelihood of the residents of Jordan or Syria, it should not worry about the Palestinians."

12. Lebanese-Syrian Track:

Summary:

Senior Middle East affairs analyst Zvi Bar'el wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz: "Hizbullah wants to define the type of challenge it is posing the new government: now that Lebanon has gotten rid of Syrian forces, the government must also get Israel out of the Sheba Farms, or else Hizbullah will take care of it."

Block Quotes:

"Hizbullah Sends a Message -- To Beirut"

Senior Middle East affairs analyst Zvi Bar'el wrote in independent, left-leaning Ha'aretz (June 30): "Hizbullah said Wednesday's attack, in which it opened fire on the IDF posts and launched mortar shells at them, came in response to Israeli infiltration of Lebanese territory. But on the eve of the appointment of a new Lebanese prime minister, which is set for today, it's difficult not to link the domestic politics to the attack on Har Dov [the Sheba Farms].... The new government will depend primarily on Christian support, as indicated by Wednesday's announcement by Christian opposition leader Gen. Michel Aoun that he plans to join the government. Such a government is likely to have a troublesome agenda from Hizbullah's perspective. A government dependent on Christian parliamentary support would not only feel free of Syrian pressure but would also have to cope with the continued implementation of UN Resolution 1559, which would

require Hizbullah to disarm and become an organization that is political but not militaristic.... Hizbullah wants to define the type of challenge it is posing the new government: now that Lebanon has gotten rid of Syrian forces, the government must also get Israel out of the Sheba Farms, or else Hizbullah will take care of it by dragging Lebanon into violent conflict with Israel. This is also Hizbullah's opportunity to see how the new political leadership in Lebanon will view the military monopoly Hizbullah has claimed in relation to Israel."

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